COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS

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COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS is intended to provide quick updates on issues of interest to members and affiliates of the Council of Ontario Universities (COU). It is produced regularly throughout the academic year. This issue covers the months of May and June 2006.

Federal budget provides support for Ontario's *Reaching Higher* plan

On May 2, 2006, the federal government announced the details of its spring budget, which included the welcome and much-needed $1 billion Post-Secondary Education Infrastructure Trust for higher education. Distributed on a per capita basis, the funding provides $390 million for Ontario postsecondary education over two years.

Ontario universities and the Ontario government have consistently urged the federal government to increase its expenditures in support of postsecondary education in the province to ensure that the province's postsecondary institutions and their students can make their full contribution to Canada. In 2005, the Postsecondary Review, led by former Premier Bob Rae, concluded that federal financial support provided to postsecondary institutions and students in Ontario over the last several years has not been enough and that the province's postsecondary system is underfunded compared to its Canadian and U.S. counterparts.

Ontario universities hope that the province will use the federal funding to support its *Reaching Higher* plan by addressing an urgent need on campuses – facilities renewal. Additional funding will enable Ontario universities to immediately undertake projects – such as improving air quality, building wheelchair ramps, restoring crumbling buildings, outfitting classrooms with modern technology and reducing energy consumption – which will help improve the quality of students' educational experience.

The province currently provides $26.7 million annually to universities toward maintenance and adaptation and renewal projects through the facilities renewal program. But the annual price tag to maintain, renew and adapt university buildings for effective usage is estimated at $260 million. An immediate infusion of funds would help address the well-documented need for facilities renewal.

New COU Task Force on Student Financial Assistance

On the heels of the government's tuition framework announcement that suggests the responsibility of the Student Access Guarantee be shared between government and universities, COU has established the Task Force on Student Financial Assistance to clarify the role that institutional aid should play. Chaired by McMaster University President Peter George, the Task Force will propose a list of recommendations to Executive Heads in time to inform the government's decision regarding the Student Access Guarantee for 2007-08 and beyond.

The Task Force will draw upon the work of the ad hoc group on the Financial Aid Calculator, led by COU Corporate and Information Services Executive Director Jan Donio and OUAC Executive Director George Granger. The group is currently working with the universities and government to

develop a tool that prospective postsecondary students will be able to use in order to understand what financial assistance, including institutional assistance, will be available to them should they decide to pursue postsecondary studies.

The Task Force's first meeting, held on May 10, was attended by representatives from the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (MTCU). Student Support Branch Director Richard Jackson and Senior Policy Analyst Liz Stayer shared concepts being considered by MTCU for determining the allocation of institutional assistance under the Student Access Guarantee. They also expressed interest in learning how universities determine which students will receive assistance, particularly those students who do not receive OSAP.

The other members of the Task Force are Dr. Alastair Summerlee, President, University of Guelph; Dr. Fred Gilbert, President, Lakehead University; Dr. Dan Lang, Senior Policy Advisor to the President and Co-ordinator, Program in Higher Education, OISE's Department of Theory and Policy Studies in Education, University of Toronto; Marty England, Special Advisor to the President, University of Western Ontario; and Dr. Rob Tiffin, Vice-President Students, York University, with representation and support from COU's senior management team.

Funding and administration of universities focus of CSAO's spring meeting

On May 1 and 2, 2006, the Council of Senior Administrative Officers (CSAO), chaired by Karen Belaire, Vice-President, Finance and Administration, McMaster University, met to share information about institutional and system-level initiatives affecting the funding and administration of universities.

At its spring meeting, which was held at the University of Windsor, CSAO looked at the activities of the University Health Insurance Plan; the solvency valuation provisions of the *Pension Benefits Act* affecting universities; health and safety regulations and the role of the Education Safety Association of Ontario and its service to universities; and the implementation of the government-funded Ontario Education Cooperative Marketplace initiative to improve procurement processes.

Guest speakers included Janet Mason, Assistant Deputy Minister, Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, who talked about the roll out of the *Reaching Higher* plan and its funding, and from the Canadian Association of University Business Officers (CAUBO), Executive Director Carole Workman and consultant A.G. (Sandy) Darling, who provided updates on various CAUBO initiatives.

OCAV meeting followed by meeting with representatives from U.S. universities

On May 8 and 9, 2006, the Ontario Council of Academic Vice-Presidents (OCAV) held its final meeting for the 2005-06 academic year, and then followed it up with a meeting with senior officials representing academic affairs at several public universities in Michigan and Ohio.

The joint gathering featured three panel sessions on collaborative research, joint academic programs, and international student and faculty exchanges. Each session was chaired by a representative from one of the three regions, and was followed by a discussion among participants. Meeting materials were exchanged on these and other areas of mutual interest for future reference. Closing remarks were delivered by Dr. Sheila Embleton, OCAV Chair and Vice-President, Academic, York University, and Dr. Daniel Hurley, Director of University Relations and Administrative Services, Presidents Council, State Universities of Michigan.

Prof. Neil Gold, Provost and Vice-President, Academic, University of Windsor, organized and hosted both meetings, which were held at the University of Windsor.

Two Executive Heads will be leaving office in 2006

Terrance Boak, who has served as Acting President and Vice-Chancellor of Brock University since August 1, 2005, will be stepping down at the end of June and resuming his role as Vice-President, Academic and Provost, a position he has held at Brock since 1998.

Dr. Boak began his career as an Assistant Professor in the Department of Educational Psychology at Memorial University in Newfoundland. He was later promoted to Associate Professor, Director of Student Services in the Faculty of Education, Associate Dean and Professor. In 1989, he assumed the role of Dean of the Faculty of Education at Brock, serving two terms.

Outside of the university, Dr. Boak chaired the Ontario Association of Deans of Education (1991-93) and served as a board member of the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (1990-93).

He received his bachelor of science (1966), bachelor of education (1969) and master of education (1971) from the University of Manitoba. In 1974, he earned his doctorate at the University of Calgary with a specialization in counselling psychology/counsellor education, and later completed a postdoctoral study in school psychology at the University of Alberta.

He will be succeeded by Dr. Jack Lightstone, former Provost and Vice-Rector at Concordia University, on July 1, 2006.

Gary Polonsky was founding President and Vice-Chancellor of the University of Ontario Institute of Technology since 2003. During this time, he continued to serve as President of Oshawa's Durham College, a position he held since 1988. Prior to being named President of Durham College, Dr. Polonsky was President of Red River College in Winnipeg.

A native of Thunder Bay, Ontario, Dr. Polonsky began his academic career at Confederation College, where he chaired the trades and technology programs. While at Confederation College, he led the creation of the Dorion Trades Building and the Thunder Bay Community Auditorium, for which he was granted the Distinguished Community Achievement Award by the community. Dr. Polonsky has also served as President of the Association of Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology in Ontario.

He holds a BSc from Lakehead University, an MA from Gonzaga University in Spokane, Washington, and a PhD from the University of Toronto.

He will be succeeded by Dr. Ronald Bordessa, Vice-President, Academic, and Provost at Royal Roads University in B.C., on July 1, 2006.

Council says goodbye to departing members at year-end meeting

On May 25, 2006, President Peter George welcomed members of Council to McMaster University, the site of the last meeting for the academic year. Each year, one of Council's five regularly scheduled meetings is held at a member institution. Council continued its tradition of extending best wishes to departing Executive Heads (see above) and Academic Colleagues:

- Dr. Bruce Muirhead, Graduate Co-ordinator, Department of History, Lakehead University;
- Dr. Chris Sarlo, Director, School of Business and Economics, Nipissing University;
- Dr. Carolyn Byrne, Dean, Faculty of Health Sciences, University of Ontario Institute of Technology;
- Dr. Paul Thompson, Director, Institute of History and Philosophy of Science and Technology, Victoria College, University of Toronto; and
- Dr. Paul Schellenberg, Chair, Department of Combinatorics and Optimization, University of Waterloo.

Call for nominations for the 2006 David C. Smith Award

COU is inviting nominations for the David C. Smith Award for Significant Contribution to Scholarship and Policy on Higher Education in Canada. The award was created to honour the memory of the late Dr. Smith and his distinguished scholarly and policy contributions to higher education in Canada. The recipient of the annual award will receive a sum of $5,000 and will be invited to deliver the 2006 David C. Smith Lecture on a subject related to the award's theme; the lecture will subsequently be published. Individuals may *not* submit their own names; candidates must be nominated, and nominations and documentation must be received by June 9, 2006. For details, visit COU's web site (www.cou.on.ca).

Secretariat bids farewell to one of its long-standing staff members

At the end of April 2006, Eleanor Cheng retired from COU after 15 years of steadfast service. She came to COU from Montreal after working in marketing research for various organizations including McGill University, where she also earned her MBA. Immersing herself at COU, she quickly established a reputation for her professionalism, attention to detail and her cheery disposition. For many years, Eleanor was dedicated to producing the annual COFO (Council of Finance Officers) reports – tirelessly prodding university representatives to get their financial information in on time and gently alerting them of any errors that might have crept into their submission. She will be missed.

COU accepting submissions for 2006 technology awards

COU is accepting submissions for the 2006 Award for Excellence in Teaching with Technology. The award program, now in its fifth year, recognizes Ontario university faculty who have demonstrated innovation and outstanding achievement in using technology to enhance and improve their teaching. All full-time, part-time or sessional faculty at any Ontario university are eligible to apply. Submissions must be received by June 23, 2006. The award, valued at $5,000, is sponsored by IBM, CGI Group and Sun Microsystems. The winner will be announced in September, and the award will be presented in October. For more details and the online submission form, visit COU's web site (www.cou.on.ca).

2006 edition of *Facts & Figures* underway

Work is well underway in revising *Facts and Figures: A Compendium of Statistics on Ontario Universities*. The annual COU publication provides aggregate statistical and graphical information on Ontario's population and university-related topics such as applicants/registrants, students, faculty and staff, finances, and physical facilities. The 2006 edition will be published in summer 2006.

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